

## **Draft Market Squid Fishery Management Plan**

### **Executive Summary**

The Draft Market Squid Fishery Management Plan (MSFMP) is presented in four sections. Section 1 presents background on the California market squid fishery. It also provides a range of alternatives for management of California's market squid fishery and the Department's Proposed Project. Section 2 includes the environmental analysis (see California Code of Regulations Title 14 §15250-15253), including a review of alternatives and options, some of which were recommended by constituents in the review of the preliminary draft MSFMP. Section 3 includes regulations that would implement the MSFMP Project's management strategy. Section 4 includes public comments and Department responses to both the Preliminary Draft Market Squid Fishery Management Plan (released May 2002) and the Draft Market Squid Fishery Management Plan (released July 2003).

The market squid (*Loligo opalescens*) fishery is one of the most important in the State of California in terms of volume and revenue. The fishery generates millions of dollars to the state annually from domestic and foreign sales. In addition to supporting an important commercial fishery, the market squid resource is important to the recreational fishery as bait and is forage for seabirds, marine mammals, and other fish taken for commercial and recreational purposes. The growing international market for squid and variable squid production in other parts of the world has resulted in an increased demand for California market squid, which led to more efficient vessels entering the fishery and increased processing capacity.

In 1997, the Legislature approved Senate Bill (SB) 364 (Sher), Chapter 785, Statutes of 1997, to establish a moratorium on new vessels entering California's commercial market squid fishery. The initial three-year moratorium placed a cap on the number of vessels in the squid fishery, established a \$2,500 permit fee to fund a California Department of Fish and Game (Department) study of the fishery, and provided the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) with interim regulatory authority over the fishery for the duration of the moratorium. As part of this process, a Squid Fishery Advisory Committee (SFAC), made up of resource stakeholders, and a Squid Research Scientific Committee (SRSC), consisting of many of the world's leading squid fishery scientists, were established to advise the Department's Director on recommendations for squid conservation and management and to provide input on the development of research protocols.

In 2001, the Legislature approved SB 209 (Sher), Chapter 318, Statutes of 2001, which provides for the management of the market squid fishery by the Commission. The bill



requires the Commission to manage the squid fishery under the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA).

The goals of the MSFMP are to manage the market squid resource to ensure long term resource conservation and sustainability, and to develop a framework for management that will be responsive to environmental and socioeconomic changes. The MSFMP establishes the management program for California's market squid fishery and procedures by which the Commission will manage the market squid resource.

Chapter three of the MSFMP describes 19 option categories for management of the market squid fishery based on four management components: 1) fishery control rules, 2) a restricted access program, 3) environmental concerns including harvest replenishment areas, general habitat closure areas, and seasonal closures areas for seabirds and 4) administrative items. The proposed project and alternative options are grouped around these four components and includes:

### **Fishery Control Rules**

- € Establish a seasonal catch limitation of 118,000 tons;
- € Monitor the fishery through the egg escapement method at a threshold level required in the CPS FMP;
- € Do not establish daily trip limits at this time;
- € Continue existing closures from noon Friday to noon Sunday from the U.S.- Mexico border to the California-Oregon border;
- € Continue existing squid monitoring programs (port sampling and logbooks);
- € Continue existing regulations that do not require a squid permit when fishing for live bait or incidental take of two tons or less;
- € Maintain existing gear options regarding shields and wattage (maximum of 30,000 watts);

### **Restricted Access Program**

- € Establish a vessel-based capacity goal for the market squid fishery that produces a moderately productive and specialized fleet (52 vessels and 34 light boats, 18 brail vessels);
- € Initial Issuance of Permits:
  - Transferable vessel permits - possession of a current market squid vessel permit and a minimum number of landings in window period;
  - Transferable brail permits - possession of a current market squid vessel permit and a minimum number of landings in window period;
  - Transferable light boat owner's permits - possession of a current market squid permit (vessel or light) and have submitted one light boat log by 12/31/00;
  - Non-transferable vessel permits - have possessed a California commercial fishing license for at least 20 years and made at least 33 landings of market squid in any one licensed season (non-transferable permits capacity goal is zero);
  - Non-transferable brail permits - possessed a California commercial fishing license for at least 20 years and made at least 10 landings of market squid



- with brail gear in any one licensed season (non-transferable permits capacity goal is zero);
- Non-transferable light boat operator permits - none;
- ⌘ Set the annual permit fee at \$5000 for all squid fishery vessels regardless of type or transferability;
- ⌘ Establish full transferability of market squid vessel permits based on comparable capacity (within 10%); establish transferability of market squid vessel permits to a vessel of larger capacity under a "2 for 1" permit retirement; individuals wishing to gain entry into the fishery must secure two permits;
- ⌘ Establish full transferability of market squid brail permits based on comparable capacity;
- ⌘ Establish full transferability of light boat permits with a "2 for 1" permit retirement;
- ⌘ Set the transferability fee at \$1,000;

## Ecological Concerns

- ⌘ **Harvest Replenishment Areas**
  - Do not set aside specific areas as harvest replenishment areas for market squid at this time;
- ⌘ **General Habitat Closure Areas**
  - Set aside the area north of Pillar point to the Oregon border as a general habitat closure for market squid;
- ⌘ **Seasonal Closures for Seabirds**
  - Establish area (one nautical mile) and time (1 February through 30 September) closure areas restricting the use of attracting lights around Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands from February through September;

## Administrative Items

- ⌘ Establish one advisory committee for the squid fishery, which includes scientific, environmental and industry representatives.

The MSFMP utilizes a framework composed of several elements that will allow the Commission to react quickly to changes in the market squid population off California without the need for a full amendment and give the Commission specific guidelines for making management decisions. These guidelines will allow for other management strategies, should they become necessary, which would effectively achieve the goals and objectives of the MSFMP and MLMA. Since market squid is included in the Federal Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan (CPS FMP) as a monitored species, the MSFMP framework structure is consistent with management by the Pacific Fishery Management Council outlined in the CPS FMP.

